

Interview with Karl F. Mautner

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

KARL F. MAUTNER

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Q: Karl, my first question to you is, give me your background. I understand that you were born in Austria and that you were engaged in what I would call political work from your early days and that you were active in opposition to the Nazis. Could you tell us something about that?

MAUTNER: Well, that is an oversimplification. I was born on the 1st of February 1915 in Vienna and worked there, went to school there, was a very poor student, and joined the Austrian army in 1935 for a year. In 1936 I got a job as accountant in a printing firm. I certainly couldn't call myself an active opposition participant after the Anschluss. I can't take credit for that...

Q: But it is true, is it not, that shortly after Hitler took over Austria, you came to the United States?

MAUTNER: Not all that immediately. My brother came right away. He already had legal status because he had lived in the United States before. So he left immediately after Hitler, and soon my sister too. But I had visa problems. I applied a little later and thought I could stick it out; holed up in Hungary where I had wealthy relatives who took me in in April '39. In other words a year after the Nazis had taken over. I left Hungary in February, 1940 and

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arrived in the United States on the 29th of February, a peculiar date, on a bitter cold day in New York. Then two days later I took out my first papers, and went to work as a baby and dog photographer. Got started with a loan of twenty-five dollars from my sister and the eight dollars I had brought along from Europe. Then I got drafted and inducted on April 3rd, 1941. By that time, I had two hundred fifty-two dollars in the bank.

Q: You had already made some progress in the new world, I take it?

MAUTNER: Yes.

Q: I want to go back to one question and that was, you talked about getting your visa. Did you actually get it from our Legation in Budapest?

MAUTNER: I got it from our Legation in Budapest from Vice Consul Milton Rewinkel.

Q: Milton Rewinkel later went on to a distinguished career himself in the Foreign Service.

MAUTNER: Yes, I ran into him later on when I myself was an FSO. In February 1940 I took a train through Yugoslavia to Italy, got on a ship in Genoa, the "Conte di Savoya."

Q: So you arrived in this country. Did you apply for citizenship?

MAUTNER: Yes, I applied for my papers the second day after arrival. First day wasn't good because it was icy, a very nasty day.

Q: And then you were drafted in the army, but being a non-citizen, did that in any way interfere with your career in the army?

MAUTNER: No, it didn't. Amazingly not. It helped that I had served in the Austrian army. I was drafted into an infantry unit down in Fort Jackson the 13th regiment. I knew my "right face, left face, about face" business and advanced fairly rapidly to the high rank of corporal, then sergeant, still earning \$21 a month. Then I was shipped out as anti-tank

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platoon sergeant to Bermuda. In Bermuda, we replaced a British territorial battalion. The American infantry battalion went there in this swap for fifty destroyers and a couple of bases in Bermuda, Antigua, Br. Guyana, etc.

Q: So Bermuda was your first overseas posting for the United States government, is that correct?

MAUTNER: As it were, yes.

Q: How long were you in Bermuda, and from there where did you go?

MAUTNER: Well, first of all, it is quite interesting that I was not a citizen. I had an accent and was a little bit of a boy scout. I was a sergeant in a platoon of pretty tough guys mostly from Kentucky, from the hills, but the uniform, the stripes and evidently something else worked so that I managed my job quite well. I think one of the reasons was that we went out to the shooting range very soon. I was a very good pistol shot having been a hunter in Austria and having shot a lot, and I outshot all those hillbillies. In fact, they had to recount the targets and I had to shoot another set which proved even better, so it established me somehow. But it was an interesting time. I stayed there almost two years, from September '41 to June '43. I couldn't become a citizen in Bermuda because there was nobody to swear me in, otherwise you could become a citizen if you had served one year in the army.

Q: Did we not have a consul in Bermuda then?

MAUTNER: I have no idea, but apparently nobody could swear me in. It had to be a judge or a commissioner or something like that. Anyway, my company commander got me a furlough in December 1942 and I went right away with the help of a friend to a judge and got sworn in. When I went back to Bermuda, I was picked for OCS in Fort Benning, in the nicest time of the year in Georgia—July, August, September. After that I was sent to Camp Ritchie which was sort of the intelligence and language center, graduated there in the winter and was shipped out to England in January '44.

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Q: You were a paratrooper by this time?

MAUTNER: Not yet. In England I volunteered for the paratroopers with a friend of mine from Vienna, Alfred Diamand, who is a professor in Bloomington, Indiana, probably retired now. When the recruiter came around, we looked at each other and said: "Who shouldn't volunteer but us?"

Q: Very good. And that made you eligible to jump on D-Day I take it?

MAUTNER: That's exactly what it did.

Q: Were you hurt in the landing then on D-Day?

MAUTNER: No, fortunately not. By the way, General Gavin was the one who pinned the wings on me. Shall I tell you a little bit about D-Day?

Q: Yes.

MAUTNER: Well, D-Day, I was pretty far back in the airplane which meant a very short opening of the parachute and I was right away on the ground. As the plane disappeared in one direction, I figured I had to go in the opposite direction because I had no idea where I was. I was in the middle of a field, surrounded by cows, and nobody else around. I started walking and being careful about what I was doing, and about the noise I was making. Then I was challenged by some of our people—we all had those click, click, click things. The password was called: "flash," and you had to answer: "thunder." They didn't like the way I pronounced "thunder" and I heard the noise of readied rifles. That was a bit hairy, but one of them eventually recognized me and about five or six of us then wandered in the same direction I had started out, and wound up about eleven a.m. instead of four a.m. in Sainte-Mere-Eglise where we had our designated drop zone and rendezvous site. Then things just went on.

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Q: You made another jump later in the war, did you not?

MAUTNER: In Holland, in Nijmegen. That's right.

Q: Did you come out of that alright too?

MAUTNER: That one was a rather comfortable experience coming down in a nice afternoon on the 17th of September on a soft plowed field. The shooting started only a little bit later.

Q: Well, telescope things until the end of the war. You were with the 82nd when they were our first troops into Berlin?

MAUTNER: They weren't really the first troops. The first troops were the 2nd Armored which went in on the 4th of July. They were relieved very shortly after by the 82nd Airborne as an occupation force.

Q: Now the 82nd Airborne didn't stay there too long, but you did stay. Would you tell us how that happened?

MAUTNER: Well, the 82nd went home in October and let me see. Somebody...one of my friends, Colonel Jim Kaiser...yes, that is where I got tied in with the Foreign Affairs establishment. This is a fairly complicated thing. My sister had a job after she arrived in the United States as a governess for a couple of little girls. They were the daughters of Ed Kellogg, a friend of my brother, who had visited us in Austria.

Q: Who was later a distinguished Foreign Service officer.

MAUTNER: He died recently. He eventually became Consul General in Dusseldorf. Great family. So I was a bit acquainted with Ed Kellogg. Somehow, I don't know anymore how, I found out that Ed was in Berlin. I looked him up and he introduced me to some of the

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people in the State Department offices there. I got acquainted with some of the young ladies there, Joan Clark among them.

Q: Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs?

MAUTNER: Yes, and with Jean Phillips, later married to Merritt Cootes and Frances Nichol, later married to the unforgettable Wendell Blancke, and other Foreign Service people. But prior to this, the 82nd ended the war in Mecklenburg, meeting the Russians there. On the way there, we were hit by a flood of German refugees and soldiers wanting to surrender. Among them were some mounted units in perfect order, every man shaved, even if they were dusty. They were Hungarians. I knew that my old friend Jim Kaiser, Commander of the 3rd Battalion of the 505th, was a horseman, and he was the one I could get on the radio. So, I radioed Kaiser and told him, we got horses here. He said: "Send them over." So, we were able to separate out a number of horses as well as a Hungarian captain who was a very fine rider and Colonel Kaiser and his friends somehow were able to hang on to those horses and bring them to Berlin. I got into that horsey group because I was a rider and we kept up this friendship. Later, through my acquaintance with those State Department contacts, I introduced Kaiser to the then Military Attach#, Colonel Hohenthal who hired him. In other words, Kaiser stayed, and when the Division left, so did I.

Q: So he and you stayed behind from the 82nd?

MAUTNER: I decided I'd stay behind too. German speakers were in demand. I had little to gain in the United States. I had no job, no degree or anything, and going on photographing dogs didn't appeal to me too much. Another introduction this whole group developed when one of my sergeants came to Berlin. He was a bassoonist and was looking for a teacher. He found one, a Viennese named Rothensteiner, a bassoonist from a bassoonist family and member of the Philharmonics who also played the piano. Some of the girls wanted to study piano and for some reason asked if I knew anybody to recommend. Rothensteiner

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was a good piano teacher and so they linked up. That was a great success. They loved him dearly. He was also very good at making “apfelstrudel.” Anyway, that got me even better into this group, and I got acquainted with more and more people whom I found congenial (and vice versa I suppose) in the Berlin Foreign Service establishment.

Q: These were people in the State Department?

MAUTNER: And eventually, the interviewer, too.

Q: Yes. Now, moving on, when you arrived in Berlin, did you think that we would be able to get along with the Russians?

MAUTNER: Yes.

Q: That was the policy of course.

MAUTNER: Partly that. I really thought we would get along. We were still fighting Germans, after all. I remember, we had a couple of rough times in Mecklenburg when we met the Russians. There were great drunken brawls of course and all kinds of things like that but we ignored that. Coming into Berlin I remember clearly seeing that big Russian tank standing on the Potsdamer Chaussee and I remember as we were coming up in a jeep saying: “As long as this stands here, there will be peace.” It was an illusion but that's what we thought.

Q: What was our relationship with the German population at that time in '45?

MAUTNER: Well, there was strict non-fraternization, not necessarily needlessly...but it went to the point where it was really pretty absurd—kitchen garbage being doused with gasoline so the Germans wouldn't take it and things like that. They were down to so many calories and weren't supposed to get more than that.

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Q: We didn't want them to pick up the extra calories from our garbage presumably. Now all this was done while we were setting up a military government for our sector of Berlin. You became acquainted with some people in the State Department. How did the U.S. military government relate to the State Department at that time in Berlin?

MAUTNER: I don't really know. I had at first little contact with military government people. The military government I'm talking about is the Berlin Sector, Colonel Howley being Director. OMGUS, the higher headquarters...

Q: OMGUS meaning Office of Military Government United States?

MAUTNER: Yes, for Germany. It was a very big headquarters and I didn't really know much what was going on. My own activities concerned mostly screening refugees in a refugee camp and funneling them to people who would interrogate them.

Q: And you were of course looking for senior Nazis, influential or not?

MAUTNER: That was at the beginning, but it didn't last long because most had left Berlin long ago. Very soon we found out that we weren't getting information of what was going on in the east and we had begun to be interested in what happened there, or our superiors became interested.

Q: What was happening in the east?

MAUTNER: Well, there were tremendous groups and "Trecks" (convoys) of refugees still filtering out of the east in very poor condition, usually, starving children and abused women. We didn't really have a clear picture of what was going on there. We were aware of the fact that the Soviets were just moving everything out, cattle, horses, machines, and everything, and living conditions in the area occupied by them were very bad.

Q: Moving it back to the Soviet Union?

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MAUTNER: Yes. Then, there were rather gruesome stories out of the Polish-administered territories of mistreatment of people, etc. Of course, at the same time all kinds of stories from the German concentration camps were surfacing. So there was still a certain balance in that.

Q: So, at that time, you were not yet working essentially in what would be called the foreign policy field?

MAUTNER: Not really, no.

Q: And how did that develop, that you got into the body politic, shall we say, of the Berlin city government?

MAUTNER: Well, let me see. When the division left, I began working for the military organization G2, Colonel Heimlich...

Q: Intelligence in other words.

MAUTNER: Yes, and did pretty much the same, i.e., interviewing refugees, etc. Then again one of those things where interplay began. We had this riding establishment with Hungarian horses and a couple of captured German horses. Colonel Kaiser and I struck up an acquaintance with Colonel Howley who had a good horse which he acquired somewhere in Germany. So we got acquainted and then sometime in the summer of '46 an Army horseshow team was put together and sent to Switzerland for a tour. It was a haphazard affair, none were top riders and even I got on that team. We went to Geneva and Bern, and performed creditably but not very successfully, with some of those horses we had in Berlin. Our Hungarian instructor came along and it was rather fun. While on that tour, Howley found out that I could get along well in German. He asked me if I wanted to join his staff as liaison officer to the Mayor because he had somebody in the job who didn't speak German, and who was going to go home anyway. I gladly accepted, of course.

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Q: So you became liaison officer to the Mayor of Berlin?

MAUTNER: Yes, but it took a while. There were elections in Berlin on the 20th of October 1946. German-speaking officers were sent out as observers. It was quite interesting. My interest in German politics was high because I was now reading the German newspapers. We had already at that time the Tagespiegel and the Neus Zeitung (which was American-run) both excellent papers. These elections were very important for Berlin and for German-Allied relations.

But a bit of context, first: in late 1945 the communists in the East had decided to form a merger of the Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party (SPD), because they thought they weren't going anywhere alone. This forced merger went reasonably smooth in the East with the defection to the communists of SPD leader Otto Grohwohl, but in the West a group—including Franz Neumann, Swolinski, Germer, and others—resisted and were able to force a referendum for all Berlin SPD members which blocked the merger for Berlin. Thus you had in West Berlin an unimpeded SPD. The party continued to function in East Berlin too but under constant severe pressure. In both parts of the city an SED (Socialist Unity Party) emerged as cover for the communists. In the Soviet Zone of Germany, the SED was the unified, merged, communist-dominated existing party.

The momentous decision of the Berlin SPD against the “merger” showed a great deal of courage. West Berliners often had to attend meetings in East Berlin. They never knew if they would get back safely. Some were abducted, some lost their bicycles which had got them there. It was dangerous to engage in politics not favored by the communists and the Soviets. In my opinion this was the first real eye-opener for many of us, showing us that Berliners had civil courage and were democrats. The October election, thus, became a bitter political struggle for the democratic elements in Berlin and when the non-communist parties won by a great margin our respect for these forces grew.

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Among us election observers were some military German-speakers, mostly from Colonel Heimlich's staff. One of these, Peter Beer, also a paratrooper who had come in with us, was an interesting man. He was born in Vienna, in fact his mother was at the same time a communist city councilor, but he was fiercely opposed to the "merger" in Berlin and very active on his fairly low level (he was a captain) in assisting the SPD, as were others on the lower level.

I did not have the feeling that our higher echelons were interested in helping one way or the other. It seemed a neutral stance was policy. I may be wrong. Certainly Irving Brown, the CIA/AF of L representative was permitted to engage vigorously in favor of the democratic forces. He was an important man. Our friends needed help. The Soviets supplied the SED with food, cigarettes and transportation and security, and things not readily available for the SPD. The relatively little help they got from our lower level was very important.

Q: It's interesting to me, if I may interrupt, Karl. Here you talk about our friends and yet this is within a year after they had been our enemies. How did they come to be our friends? Can you comment on that?

MAUTNER: Well, I think I go back to these merger days in early 1946 when it turned out that the German democrats, the leftovers of the Weimar Republic, were people you could rely on to do the right thing. But of course, other things happened in between. The Russians, or the Soviets, were getting more difficult, slowly but surely. We noted that the Russian-appointed city government which the elections were to replace had a mayor who was a total figurehead, an architect name Werner, but the real power was his deputy, Karl Maron, a communist. That same pattern applied throughout the districts the western allies took over. There was always the Moscow installed deputy. The mayors were replaced first but the second in command was harder to remove, elections or no elections.

Q: And they were the communists, the second men usually?

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MAUTNER: Yes, and there was a great deal of obstruction in the labor union field which the communists attempted to dominate also in the West. Slowly the atmosphere had begun to deteriorate. By the time the merger episode had played itself out, I think those of us on the working level had concluded the Berliners, certainly the Social Democrats and also the other democratic parties, could be considered our friends.

Q: That answers my question in that regard. Our friends were not being helped in the same way that the communists were being helped by the Soviets?

MAUTNER: Certainly not as massively.

Q: How did that change over time, or did it change?

MAUTNER: You mean did we help them out?

Q: Yes. You referred earlier to the higher levels of our government and at that time that was represented by General Clay who was our military governor in Germany. Was it hard for General Clay to accept socialists since so many of our pre-war army officers had been so conservative in their background and in their pronouncements?

MAUTNER: I don't think so, really. I think General Clay followed pretty much the trends of the time. If you look at his writings and everything else, it seems he was convinced he could get along with the Russians for a long time, until it became clear during the 1947 Moscow conference that things weren't going the way he thought they should, and General Marshall came to the conclusion that we just weren't getting anywhere with the Soviets on an all-German solution, and, therefore we had to stand on our own.

Q: You mentioned the Soviets of course in their sector of Berlin, and the British in passing, but the French were also there. How did the British and French factor in and did they work closely with us in this opposition to the Soviets?

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MAUTNER: The French actually were quite obstructionist, very difficult. Later on, we came to appreciate their sturdiness. At that time they were just plain difficult. Not that of course we didn't notice as much on our level as on the higher level, the Berlin Kommandatura, and of course the Allied Control Council.

Q: The Kommandatura being the governing body for the city of Berlin and the Allied Control Council the governing body for Germany. When did it become clear to you that the Soviets had no intention of agreeing to four-power rule in Berlin?

MAUTNER: Well, let me go back. After those elections, after the new Magistraat took his seat...

Q: What is Magistraat?

MAUTNER: The Magistraat was the governing body of Berlin, let's say the cabinet of the mayor running the city.

Q: So, we should think of that as a Cabinet then?

MAUTNER: Yes. First of all, there were three mayors elected at that time. One of them was a Social Democrat, Mr. Ostrowski; second one was a Christian Democrat, Dr. Friedensburg; and the third one was an SED man, Dr. Heinrich Acker. And under them was a cabinet of various functions: finance, building and housing, food and agriculture, etc.

Q: You mentioned three mayors. Was one a senior mayor, a governing mayor, or were they all equal?

MAUTNER: The senior one was the Social Democrat because the Social Democrats had gained the majority.

Q: That would have been Ostrowski?

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MAUTNER: In fact, was it a majority or a plurality, I'm not quite sure anymore. I think it was a majority.

Q: But there was one mayor over the other two? Deputy mayors?

MAUTNER: Yes. One was a bit more than first among equals. Now, you asked before when it became clear that the cooperation was becoming difficult. That was January, '47. That's when I started in the City Hall. Initially, I was nominally the deputy to Colonel Kaiser, because it was a Colonel's job and I was barely a Major then. But Colonel Kaiser left things pretty much to me and was transferred very soon and I took over the job. One of the first things I ran into was of course what I was going to do down there. Kaiser and I had replaced a Lieutenant Colonel who was a very nice man but didn't speak German. He told me when I took over: "Now, don't forget you represent the General who represents the President. You call the mayor and the mayor comes in and you make him stand at attention, etc." which of course I was able to change very quickly.

Q: You're already sliding into the diplomatic way of doing things?

MAUTNER: Well, there were really very few instructions for me what to do. In my predecessor's view, you just transmitted orders, and that was it. But I very quickly considered the job as something going in both directions and started writing little reports. Somebody would come in the office, maybe Dr. Friedensburg, and would tell me about some development. Then without really understanding very clearly what was behind the things he told me, the intrigues, and machinations, I wrote it down and reported it to Colonel Howley. That in turn irritated people in Colonel Howley's political section, Captain Biel especially, whose prerogative it was to cover this kind of thing and he confronted me. I was smart enough to gang up with him from that time on because he knew much more about the local scene, and we became good friends, and still are.

Q: Dr. Biel never doubted his own ability as I recall?

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MAUTNER: By the way, I remember an incident that is of interest. It was in August, I believe, the 21st or 22nd of August 1945 and I think it was the first concert of the Philharmonic after the Americans had moved into Berlin. It took place in the Titania Palace in the American sector, an old movie theater which served as a concert hall. The conductor was a young man named Borchard. I believe he was a White Russian. His sister, by the way, Madame Kudriavzev, had served for many years as a receptionist in the American Embassy in Berlin. Unfortunately, Borchard lived in the British sector, and somebody who had a car took him back into the British sector. In those days we still had border guards between the American and British sector and the U.S. border guard tried to stop him. But the car did not halt and the guard shot and killed Borchard. It was of course most unfortunate. It was a man from the 82nd Airborne Division. General Gavin was called on the carpet and was asked what happened. "Well, I taught my people to shoot and kill and why do we have those stupid borders between the British and American sectors anyway. Let's eliminate them." And from that day on they were abolished.

Q: A point of interest. Were there still border guards between the British and French sectors?

MAUTNER: I don't think they continued after that incident.

Q: So the only border guards would have been between the three western sectors and the Soviet sector?

MAUTNER: Yes, but I don't really remember if anybody was stopped in those days on these borders, but it could be.

Q: That was an unfortunate incident, but I gather from then on there were many incidents that happened, but generally it involved Germans and Soviets, or westerners and Soviets?

MAUTNER: Yes, but fortunately, not as prominent people as Mr. Borchard. By the way, you might be interested to know that I was able to save the Philharmonics more or less

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because Mr. Rothensteiner needed reeds for his bassoon section. The Russians had used his supply for fire kindling. He tried to get some through the military government and the ones our music officer got him weren't flexible enough and didn't work. When I went on a skiing vacation to Switzerland early in 1946, he gave me an address where I could get some reeds, and I brought back enough to keep the bassoonists functioning.

Q: So the reeds section of the Philharmonic was saved?

MAUTNER: Yes. Interesting that we had a “music officer”, presumably in order to teach the Germans how to play Beethoven.

Q: In the meanwhile you were encountering increasing problems in your job as liaison with the city government. Not so much with the Germans as with the obstructions from the Soviets, I gather, to what the western powers wanted to do?

MAUTNER: We were talking about the Ostrowski crisis, I think. Ostrowski was the elected Social Democratic mayor. He was a big tall, rather impressive looking man with a bald Mussolini like head but he called himself “neither an Ostrowski nor a Westrowski”.

Q: A pun on the German East-West division.

MAUTNER: Yes. Of course it didn't go down too well because in the meantime it was quite clear that the Social Democrats sided with the west, whereas the SED, a minority party, sided with the east. So the Social Democrats voted him out of office for consorting with the SED, saying, “You are no longer our mayor, our representative at the Magistraat,” and voted in Ernst Reuter in his stead. That brought on a real crisis because Reuter had been a prominent communist in the 1917 revolutionary days. He had been a prisoner of war with the Russians since 1914.

Q: In the First World War.

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MAUTNER: Yes. He had even helped establish the Volga German Republic in the Soviet Union. Then disillusioned with the Bolsheviks, he came back to Germany, and eventually joined the Social Democrats. He became a very successful transportation expert. For example, in Greater Berlin, he was instrumental in getting the U-bahn and the S-bahn coordinated.

Q: The U-bahn being the subway and the S-bahn being the above ground rapid railway?

MAUTNER: Then he became mayor of Magdeburg. In the Nazi days, he was for a while in a concentration camp, then emigrated to Turkey where he taught in the university in Ankara. After the war he was induced to come back to Germany, arriving in Berlin right after the elections of the new Magistraat. In April, he was elected to succeed Ostrowski. That created a crisis situation, because the Soviets insisted he could not become mayor unless his election was approved by the Kommandatura. That required a unanimous four-power vote and they were not willing to endorse him. It went back and forth. I don't remember the details anymore, but although we kept insisting that an election is an election and we needn't approve this kind of elected high official, the Russians were adamant. It moved up to the Control Council level and I think a "compromise" was reached. In other words, we just relented, and Reuter was not made mayor. Louise Schroeder, a Social Democrat, was moved up instead as Acting Mayor. I'd like to talk about her later. So the city struggled along. Reuter was really de facto mayor. He ran a lot of the show, but he was not acknowledged as the mayor. That was one of the first overt signs of problems with the Soviets.

Q: In the city, yes.

MAUTNER: In the meantime, things kept getting a little more difficult. There were incidents of obstruction on the scrap iron front. The railway system throughout Berlin was under the control of the east, and suddenly unauthorized trains of scrap iron started moving out of West Berlin into East Berlin and things like that. There was constant interference

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by the previously appointed communist underlings in the functioning of various cabinet departments. Very difficult situations arose in the case of the education department where an old-time communist was the number two man, Wildangel, who spoke French and therefore was also favored by the French, as well as the Russians. Another elected official named Nestriepke couldn't get anything done in his department and was constantly attacked by the Russians in the Kommandatura. There was one day when we had a new Commandant General, Cornelius Ryan...Howley, mind you, was director of the military government of Berlin, but only later became Commandant, a two-star job. Until then, he was deputy to the Commandant who was appointed by General Clay. General Ryan came from the military government side throughout the war. A very nice man. He acquitted himself well later in the McCarthy days but he was really not up to the problems that arose in Berlin. One day in a Kommandatura meeting I happened to attend, the Russian brought up another of his usual charges about some bad things one or another of the Social Democratic elected cabinet members had done. In this case, it was Dr. Nestriepke, who was the education counselor. He had allegedly done something the Russians considered insubordination. Whereupon General Ryan suddenly spoke up and said: "Then I'll propose we dismiss the man."

Q: Without inquiring into the details?

MAUTNER: Yes. Well, details were given by the Russian. But the British had a new General Herbert who wasn't really quite sure what was going on and the French didn't like Nestriepke, they favored Wildangel because he had lived in France. So, bingo, suddenly Nestriepke was dismissed. Howley was there tearing his hair and we were all upset.

Q: The decision had been made.

MAUTNER: The decision had been made. There were all kinds of things of that nature. In the Kommandatura one day the Soviets complained that Reuter, who was in charge of public utilities, had distributed ration cards number one to his friends. Ration cards

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came in five classes. One was for heavy workers, top artists, and the like. Two, a little less good, was for government officials and so down the line to five which was just about starvation level for nobodies like housewives and widows. In our military government, German employees got one ration level higher than they normally would have gotten under the German regulations. Now, there was only a limited number of class one ration cards available, and the Soviets accused Reuter of having favored some of his political friends with them. So Reuter was called on the carpet by the public utilities officer. We in the Kommandatura had a very nice man in public utilities who ran a gas company in Kansas but was not terribly up to snuff in international politics. Reuter, however, was very articulate and spoke good English. He explained that he had taken away ration cards giving more household gas and electricity to prominent communists who had not contributed anything to the city's functioning and given them to people who were working hard as officials of the gas company. That saved Reuter from being censored.

Q: Incidents like that make you wonder how people keep their temper at times and their good sense.

MAUTNER: Yes. Well you yourself remember some of the things at the Kommandatura. It was not an easy battling ground.

Q: Now, we are of course coming on to the approach to the blockage period of June '48. There was a bit of a build-up which I'm sure you'll recall?

MAUTNER: Well, let me see. Already in the fall of '47 there was an indication of problems ahead. Suddenly, during a rainy period, a whole big load of potatoes were dumped at one of the American sector railway stations.

Q: Potatoes destined for all of Berlin?

MAUTNER: It was a delivery from the east of an agreed-upon allocation. But the next day you saw in the Taegliche Rundschau, the Soviet-sponsored German paper, that

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“Americans are neglecting the feeding of Berlin, they let potatoes rot in the rain.” The east had not notified anybody the shipment was coming, and no storage space was readily available—everything was bombed out. Meanwhile the food councilor, under tremendous pressure by one of his communist deputies, came to me wailing that we had to do something to get those things stored away. (His name was Fullsack, by the way.) There was a big empty factory-type building in the American sector which was requisitioned by the U.S. Army but not being used. Can I get that for him quickly? I went to Howley, who immediately was very forthcoming. We got it the next day and moved the potatoes, which were very important for feeding of Berlin. That kind of thing happened more often.

Q: Devilish tricks, in other words?

MAUTNER: Yes, little things here, little things there, and gradually getting more difficult to handle. There was a blockade of postal deliveries to Berlin, with the East press claiming the Soviet zone being “impoverished and sucked out” by the west by smuggling, etc. Nothing could go into the west by parcel post. It was also blocked from going to West Germany for a while. At first the Allied reaction was that this was something for the Germans to handle, which of course it wasn't, and it began to build up, more and more. In the chapter on Berlin I wrote a book titled “Witnesses to the Origins of the Cold War,” I went into more detail about those things.

Q: These pinpricks kept getting worse until the breakup of the Control Council which governed Germany?

MAUTNER: The Control Council broke up on the 20th of March, 1948. I think the Soviets concluded after the 1947 Foreign Ministers' Conference in Moscow, that they were not going to get their way in all of Germany. They began to work in the direction of two Germanies. Well, it's a very difficult judgement call. There are always people who say that

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it was our fault that Germany was split apart. I think it was our fault, only in that we didn't give in to the Soviet demands.

Q: That's called revisionism, I believe?

MAUTNER: Yes, revisionists make a strong case, but I think they are wrong. Looking back, I think the turning point of our attitude toward Germany and our relations with the Soviets dates from the speech in Stuttgart by Secretary of State Byrnes.

Q: That was September 1946?

MAUTNER: October or September, yes. That was when it became clear that western interests in that part of Germany, where the West had influence, had to be maintained. But how this worked out on the higher level, of course, is another story.

Q: You pointed out that two key events on the diplomatic front, Secretary of State Byrnes's speech in Stuttgart in 1946 and Secretary Marshall's visit to Moscow in early 1947, were turning points in determining our policy towards Germany after the war. How did you see these things being reflected at your level, that is in the Berlin city government? And another question: tell us what you can about the lead-up to the famous Berlin Blockade?

MAUTNER: Well, I don't think we saw much of anything reflected from the Byrnes visit and the Foreign Ministers' meeting on our immediate low-level activities.

Q: The Russians didn't change their policies? They didn't become any more difficult?

MAUTNER: They were difficult already. There were always difficulties about West Germany—the Berlin transport lines. At first, of course coming to Berlin was no problem for the allied forces. We simply showed an ID card at the border and moved on. Later there had to be travel orders; then they had to be translated and it got more and more complicated. Some people called it “salami tactics”; others disagreed, saying it was just better organization of the various administrative problems. The Germans at first could

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move reasonably freely between the sectors into the zones, but that didn't last very long. They were always subject to searches and roadblocks and "requisition" of whatever they were carrying. Then they needed all kinds of "propusks" (passes) to go from place to place, and movement became increasingly difficult. They practically could not cross the zone border without proper permission. There would be various meetings in the west zone, let us say meetings of the Germany-wide CDU party with Adenauer presiding, and the Berlin CDU people had trouble getting there, and it was even more difficult for the east zone CDU members. There were minister president meetings and similar kinds of things and attendance got increasingly difficult. Then came another of the postal blockades I alluded to, it was some time in January 1948. Suddenly, mail to West Germany piled up in the American sector train station (which was controlled by the East German (Reichsbahn) and Soviet supervision with the East claiming the Americans were trying to censor the mail.

Q: Were we censoring the mail or was there no truth whatsoever in that?

MAUTNER: No. Then, autobahn trouble started. We and the British had aid stations half way down the autobahn to Helmstedt to aid our own motorists. The Soviets ordered them closed down.

Q: The autobahn going through the Soviet zone of Germany?

MAUTNER: Yes. Then they would arbitrarily stop vehicles in the middle of the autobahn. Car travel became more and more unpleasant.

On top of that, the Soviet claimed the bridge over the Elbe at Magdeburg had to be repaired, and closed it to auto traffic. (By the way, that bridge had been built by the U.S. Army engineers toward the end of the war and was still in use until the 1970s.)

Q: That was the one bridge on the autobahn that was absolutely essential to get to the west.

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MAUTNER: Yes. Later on came incidents with the allied trains. The Soviets demanded the right to inspect them and we refused. After going back and forth on this, the Soviets would relax a little bit and let some trains through but kept coming back.

Q: But both of these on the rail and in regard to the road, these were in violation of the four-power agreements?

MAUTNER: Where were they, the four-power agreements? Apparently there weren't any really, because the only detailed written agreement about access was for air traffic where the Air Traffic Committee of the Control Council agreed to three air corridors and a twenty-two mile circle around the air traffic Control Center of Berlin.

Q: Yes, I think the rail and road arrangements were bilateral agreements between military commanders to assure access when we took over Berlin.

MAUTNER: Yes, the arrangements for access were never made formal agreements because General Clay somewhat defensively claimed later that he understood that it was a matter of word of honor and self-understood. He said that the right was implied by the fact that we were in Berlin.

Q: Now, there were these transport problems in getting into Berlin, but was it not the currency conversion actually that triggered the blockade?

MAUTNER: I think it was in a way true, although the Russian commandant, General Kotikov, walked out of a Kommandatura meeting before the currency reform and before the actual beginning of the blockade. If I am not mistaken, it was the 20th of June. That was an endless Kommandatura meeting, lasting sixteen hours or so. Howley got tired and turned the meeting over to his deputy, Colonel Babcock, and Kotikov seized on this as an insult and said, "If the Americans don't cooperate, I'll walk out," and left. That was the end

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of the four-power Kommandatura. Of course, talks about possible currency reform were already going on, but more on the Control Council level.

Q: For all of Germany?

MAUTNER: For all of Germany. Not about Berlin. I came under pressure from Mayor Reuter and city treasurer Haas, both of whom said: "We know something is coming and we don't know the exact details, but we have a very good idea. Make sure that your chief (that was Howley) gets Berlin included. Otherwise we'll go down the drain." So I went to Howley who said: "They don't know anything, and I don't know anything; we're not supposed to know anything." Those working on the currency reform were completely sequestered, not allowed to talk to anyone. When introduced, the currency reform applied only in west Germany. What really persuaded Clay and the other military governors to include soon Berlin shortly thereafter, I don't know. But it didn't take very long. Berlin got the Westmark with a B stamp on it.

Q: With a B for Berlin on it?

MAUTNER: Yes. They were shipped in by plane. The Soviets did not allow the circulation of B marks in East Berlin or East Germany. I suspect we were quite happy about that because it would have siphoned off the good marks and brought in the east marks from the zone. Anyhow, with that, all traffic into Berlin from the west, except allied air traffic, stopped. The day was the 26th of June. At first, General Clay concluded that the allied forces could be supplied by air but for a while it was thought that the city population could be supplied by air.

Q: And there were about two million people living in West Berlin?

MAUTNER: About two million. It quickly became evident Berlin could no longer get electricity or food from the East anymore. Clay saw something had to be done and started an impromptu airlift with old C-47s (DC 3s) to bring in some food and other essentials.

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That airlift steadily expanded and turned into an enormous operation. I had no idea until much later what an effort on the national level it required, what organization. General Tunner, I think, was the organizational genius. In the end one plane every two minutes came to West Berlin.

Q: And Tunner was in Wiesbaden, as I recall?

MAUTNER: General LeMay was one who inspired this...

Q: In Washington, wasn't he?

MAUTNER: Yes. And General Clay who pushed it through Washington at the War Department—I think it was still the War Department, or was it already the Defense Department, I don't remember, there was great hesitation.

Q: I think it was the War Department.

MAUTNER: There was great reluctance in some quarters because it was thought that Berlin was indefensible. But Clay was really at his best at that time and insisted. Truman backed him up and we had an airlift. The airlift was one of the few clear cut victories we had in that era.

Q: Karl, if I may refer to something you said a few minutes ago, when you referred to Mayor Reuter. But earlier you'd said that he didn't become mayor because the Soviets had vetoed him.

MAUTNER: That is quite right.

Q: Would you explain that?

MAUTNER: Well, the fall of 1948 was a peculiar time. The acting mayor was Louise Schroeder, a remarkable woman. She was frail, very small, but she had been trained in

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the old Social Democratic school of speaking to the public without a microphone. She had a voice that carried a Hall and she was astute and capable. Although she was frequently ill, she ran the city quite well. We liaison officers once had a luncheon meeting with her. We brought her some food, a care package or so. The Russians came with a fish. I think they had a carp wrapped up in a Pravda, but anyway it was one of the last joint affairs...

Q: A fresh fish from the Russians and a care package from the U.S.?

MAUTNER: Yes. I don't remember whether it was at her place or at Dr. Suhr's, chairman of the city assembly. Anyway, she was great, but of course the real mayor, the elected mayor was still Reuter. In the meantime, the pressure intensified on those elected officials in the east sector continued...don't forget that Berlin City Hall was in the east sector. The deputies to the assembly were eventually chased out of the assembly hall, by communist goon squads and east-controlled police. So they moved the assembly to the West Sector into the Technical University building, at that time unheated and unpleasant, but at least a safe haven. Then pressure built up on the food distribution office and food councilor Fullsack had to move west. After him, the public utilities man had to move because the Russians installed their own "liaison man" to run that operation. The elected mayors in the East Berlin districts were pushed out after being accused of inefficiency—because they couldn't deliver coal which they didn't have, and this kind of thing. By the time December came around...now wait a minute, there is something else. Before the blockade while it was still in action the Kommandatura had decided that there should be elections in all of Berlin in December...

Q: This would be in 1948 then?

MAUTNER: December, 1948. A new constitution was drafted by the city assembly, and delivered to the Kommandatura on schedule, but only recognized and okayed by the three western powers. The Soviets refused to recognize it because it made no provisions for socialization and other kinds of things they wanted. The three commandants nevertheless

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decided that the elections should take place and approached the Soviets about it. They refused to allow elections in December in their sector. The western commandants, in this case the French, very astutely decided to go ahead in the west sectors regardless. Those elections were to take place on the 5th of December with an open invitation to the Soviets to permit voting in their sector too. But, before the 5th of December, I think it was December 2, the Soviet sector arranged a monster rally in one of their theaters, the Admiral Palast, of the so-called mass organizations, of course all communists. The FDGB, the workers organizations, etc., and the participants "elected" a Mayor and assembly by acclamation.

Q: And trade union, yes.

MAUTNER: And the women's organizations, all those front organizations...

Q: Victims of fascism, the whole group, yes.

MAUTNER: And the political parties too, which by then were pretty well under Soviet control. They decided to dismiss the existing mayors and elect their own Lord Mayor, and that was Fritz Ebert, the son of Friedrich Ebert, the former Social Democratic President of Germany in 1918.

Q: So this meant two governments in one city, is that right?

MAUTNER: Well, it became that way rapidly. Now, Fritz Ebert was an alcoholic and not very useful, but he was made mayor. His deputy was Karl Mason, the old Moscow-trained hand. We liaison officers were still based in the city hall downtown, but things were beginning to crumble because most of the city councilors or the cabinet ministers had already left. On December 2nd when Ebert was elected, the communist authorities moved him to City Hall and we couldn't do anything about it because they had physical control with their police. So we got the then legitimate acting mayor, Dr. Friendensburg, to come down the next morning (he lived in the West) and claim his office. We were all there; my

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British colleague, Colonel Whiteford, Captain Ziegelmaier from the French, and myself. Friedensburg arrived in his somewhat ramshackle car and tried to walk into the City Hall, but was stopped by the East guards. He said: "I am the mayor." They said: "No you're not." He responded with, "I yield to force," and went back home. We witnessed the exchange and prepared to move out of City Hall as well. The British ran into a lot of trouble moving their office because they apparently had no receipts for their furniture. We had legitimate receipts for ours and knew where it had come from. There was a very interesting janitor on the scene, a man named Mittag, who had kept track of everything on the premises and of course turned the records over to the communists. So, we had a moving out party out of the City Hall December 3.

Q: All of which was taking place within the Soviet sector?

MAUTNER: All of this taking place within the Soviet sector, on the 2nd and 3rd of December.

Q: During the blockade"

MAUTNER: During the blockade, before the elections, yes. Now, Howley said, "if they want to block you, you run them down with your car." Well fortunately they were blocking with a big truck, so I couldn't run them down. But anyway it was quite an exodus, I still have a picture from the New York Times of Whiteford, Ziegelmaier and myself. Howley put me back in uniform, made me a Major again. We moved to where the Assembly was meeting in West Berlin with whatever we got out...our files, etc. The British also had a hard time getting their files out but I got mine out intact. Then we set up the Liaison Offices in the West. The elections took place only in West Berlin on the 5th of December. The SPD won a flat majority, some 52% of the vote. With that the Commandants recognized Reuter as mayor. West Berlin then had a real elected government: Reuter, Lord Mayor, with Friedensburg deputy. The "Magistraat" now had become a "Senat" because Berlin

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according to that new constitution was now a "Land" and the "Lord Mayor" became "Governing Mayor".

Q: So in a sense Reuter had been elected mayor of Berlin twice?

MAUTNER: Twice, before taking his seat.

Q: Well, that was a long digression on Mayor Reuter, but since he was such a key figure during these blockade months, I thought it would be useful to find out how he finally took his position. Now how did your job change when you moved into the western sector of Berlin, and specifically during this blockade period?

MAUTNER: It didn't change that much, because the job I had was really tailor-made to whatever was required. It became more one of listening to good advice. Reuter was an extremely astute man, very intelligent, and obviously a leadership figure, and he had many, many suggestions to make. By that time, the military government people, especially on our side, were very willing to listen to him. Clay had already made contact and respected him and Howley, of course, too. Howley was a very interesting man, a real Irishman. He had quite a temperament. He had right-leaning views but was very, very sensitive to popular moods and had good political instincts. He knew Reuter was the man to rely on, and the Berliners liked Reuter and relied on him, so the Social Democrats were okay with Howley.

Q: So, Reuter and Howley got along?

MAUTNER: Absolutely, yes. There was a very momentous day in 1948, September 9, played a role. When the currency reform was discussed in Moscow during the summer, there was some tendency on the part of Americans to give in and relax the absolute demand to have the westmark in West Berlin. And I think actually that Bedell Smith (our Ambassador in Moscow) at that time was ready to give in on that point. The matter was

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referred back to the Control Council on Germany which began to meet again on that issue in the Control Council building in Berlin.

Q: After six months with no meetings?

MAUTNER: Six months or more than that, with no meetings. That of course got Berliners quite upset. Reuter was quite adamant, insisting that, "If you give up the Bmark, we are gone. They'll swallow us up like a sausage." The authorities convoked a massive rally down in front of what is today the rebuilt Reichstag. How did the crowd get there? Transport was extremely poor. You had to walk endlessly because there was no electricity, and few streetcars. Yet some three hundred thousand people showed up. Reuter and Neuman spoke, and leaders from the other parties, too.

Tape II

Q: On September 9, 1948, there was a big demonstration against the blockade. What was your feeling at that time? Could the Berliners stick it out? Did you feel that this demonstration showed that the Berliners were willing to suffer and carry on their life during the blockade?

MAUTNER: Yes. That's a little bit of a leading question, but I am quite sure that was the case, because the demonstrators wanted to show that the Berliners led by Ernst Reuter did not want the currency issue to become a vehicle for turning them over to the east. They wanted to show the allied authorities that they were willing to hold out even though the coming winter would mean hardships, and that they trusted the airlift and the western allies, especially the Americans. They heard ringing speeches by Reuter, Ernst Lemmer, Neuman. I think Irving Brown spoke, too. (Irving Brown was representative of the AFL/CIO and a very important figure in supporting the free trade union movement in Berlin and Germany.) They then endorsed a document which asserted that Berlin was prepared to hold out no matter how tough the times and marched to the nearby Control Council to

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present it. Their action stiffened the backs of the three western allies against any sellout of Berlin. It was a very decisive moment I am convinced.

Q: You mentioned the three western commandants. What was their role during this period of the blockade, because you indicated that Mayor Reuter was a strong figure himself and apparently was taking more power unto himself and to the Germans. What role did the allies play in this? Were the commandants helpful?

MAUTNER: The commandants were certainly helpful. Reuter wasn't even mayor in the beginning, but he was certainly a dominating and dominant figure, through his personality, his intellect, and also through his reputation. The commandants by that time had begun to consult with Reuter quite frequently. The commandants were in a way the local rulers, and it must be pointed out that the French who were generally not very helpful on the Control Council, were very good in Berlin and were in favor of holding out. There was this incident with General Ganeval who decided to blow up a radio tower in his sector which interfered with air access and was controlled by the Russians. General Ganeval was important in permitting the construction of Tegel airfield, which was a miracle anyway because it involved building an enormous airfield out of a wasteland using mostly hand tools, and not terribly efficient earth moving equipment, because modern machines were too big to be easily flown in by air.

Q: Was that airport Tegel finished in time to play a role in the blockade?

MAUTNER: Yes, it definitely played a role. We had otherwise only Tempelhof and Gatow which were barely adequate for that purpose.

Q: Tempelhof in the American sector, and Gatow in the British sector. And then Tegel which was in the French sector?

MAUTNER: That's right, although Tegel was not quite fully operational, but the very existence of it was important.

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Q: And the fact that the French General would blow up a Soviet radio tower to make the airport possible.

MAUTNER: Yes, it was a radio transmitter for the Russian-controlled news station. Those things were very important. They showed the Berliners that the allies were with them. The Berliners had become friends, that was quite obvious.

Q: Now, we know from history that the blockade was successful, that it ended in May 1949, and that Berlin settled into a new and freer life closely attached to the Federal Republic which by this time was becoming a force. Were there close links between West Berlin and the Federal Republic? How did the constitutional situation develop there?

MAUTNER: First of all, the Federal Basic Law, which was more or less a constitution, contained various articles, I don't recall them exactly anymore, that stated Berlin is a land of the Federal Republic. Some of those were considered not quite compatible with the Four-Power status by the allies and were suspended when the Federal Basic Law went into effect. It all took place after the end of the blockade May 12, 1949. The relationship between Berlin and the Federal Government was of course at that time still a little less close as it later became. Although Mayor Reuter...don't forget Mayor Reuter became mayor of all Berlin, nominally, but effectively of West Berlin on December 5, 1948. He pushed very much for actual inclusion of Berlin as a "land", i.e. a state of the Federal Republic. At that time, it was a talk of Berlin as the eleventh land of the FRG.

Q: The land of the Federal Republic?

MAUTNER: Yes. Berlin in the meantime had itself become a land, i.e. a state, and the Lord Mayor had become the Governing Mayor through that new Berlin constitution recognized by the western allies, but it was only to a limited extent a part of the Federal Republic. Berlin took over federal laws by a separate legislative act. Some federal laws

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were not permitted or were suspended in part by the allies, partly at the federal level and partly also at the Kommandatura level.

Now, Reuter's personality played of course a tremendous role, as did the personality of the higher leading persons in Germany from now on. The allies were fortunate to have people who could run the show, and the allies were also unusually intelligent enough to let them run the show. We had Reuter who knew the city in and out, and had the confidence of the population, and very fortunately spoke excellent English and excellent French and thereby was able to deal one on one with his allied partners, and really by his personality dominated the scene. Sometimes his push to get Berlin closer to the Federal Republic earned him rebuke. But running the place and making major decisions about how to advance the fortunes of the city, that was really left to him. We had people like Howard Jones, our economic counselor, who was bright enough to rely on the excellent people Reuter had brought back to Berlin. For example, people like Paul Hertz who was an emigre. He was once a Reichstag deputy and then emigrated to America and was in his sixties. Reuter brought him back because he was an excellent finance and economics expert. Howard Jones and most of the allies relied very much on Hertz's capability and let him run the economy. This is terribly important and also links in with the whole Marshall plan business because of the fact that we found excellent managers we could rely on and who could administer the American funded programs.

Q: Although their personalities were far different, it seems to me that Adenauer in West Germany played about the same dominant role vis-a-vis the high commissioners that Reuter did with the commandants of Berlin. A powerful personality could do what he wanted.

MAUTNER: Well, he couldn't do everything he wanted, but he could accomplish a lot because he had capability and a persuasive personality.

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Now, Adenauer was a different man. He was far more scrappy, far more powerful in many ways, and had the good fortune to have somebody like Mr. McCloy there who trusted him.

Q: Now, as West Berlin recovered from the blockade, what was the situation in Western Germany which had its own government? Were there any links between West Berlin and East Berlin? Were there any attempts to get the city together again?

MAUTNER: I don't think there were many links at all. There was certainly no official contact on any level. There may have been on the lower level contacts, but I doubt it. There were of course a few, mostly Social Democratic deputies to the city assembly in the West who still lived in the east sector and who represented the east sector in the west sector parliament. Their luck ran out fairly soon however. They had to move into the west and that's about the size of the contacts.

Q: In other words, the conditions improved in West Berlin and did not really improve in East Berlin.

MAUTNER: No, they didn't improve there. There were some vast building projects on the so-called Frankfurter Allee which was renamed Stalin Allee. They built some typical Stalinist housing projects along the Allee for show. They built this enormous war memorial. In general I think the city was administered strictly on the Stalinist model. The big tensions arose on really serious east-west problems. Occasionally there were kidnappings. I remember the case of Dr. Linse who ran a western-oriented lawyers' organization that radiated out into the east. His Kidnappings involved the KGB. It was a dirty cold war at that time. One of the really visible signs of the tension was the flow of refugees from the east to the west. They came through Berlin because access to West Berlin was still free. All they had to do was get on the S-bahn in East Berlin and go into West Berlin.

Q: You mean they could come from east Germany, the Soviet zone, right into West Berlin?

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MAUTNER: They could come from the eastern zone into East Berlin, get on the S-bahn and come over. There were occasional attempts to stop them on the part of the east police, but in general there was a fairly free flow into West Berlin. At times there were great masses coming in whenever the pressure increased. With the political pressure for example to increase the work norms in the factories, and other hardships, collectivization of the farms, more people came out of the east and flowed into the west. West Berlin established refugee camps. People were screened to determine whether they were really refugees and then usually flown out to West Germany because they couldn't travel on the autobahn which was controlled by the east. That thing built up to the very high degree in early 1953 when again the pressure on the part of the eastern communists had increased. They needed higher production. They increased the production norms and didn't increase the rations pay or anything else. That culminated in a big blow-up on June 16 and 17 when the East German workers, especially in the Hennigsdorf steel plant north of Berlin went on strike. They marched into East Berlin, demonstrated there vigorously. As Russian tanks moved in, they threw rocks at them. It was quite a show. Eventually of course it was quashed with brute force. We now know several hundred died. The demonstration extended into various localities in the eastern zone, such as Magdeburg. The 17th of June 1953 is also one of the landmarks of some importance. In fact, in West Germany it became a holiday, although the revolt was put down. Now, we had very interesting allied reactions on that. They were not terribly good, because there were some officials perturbed because the Germans revolted against an allied power.

Q: Even though it was the Russians?

MAUTNER: Even though it was the Soviets against whom the workers rebelled.

Q: Was this reflected in the attitude of Americans, French, or British in Berlin?

MAUTNER: Yes. At the commandants level where there were relatively new people, it was reflected in reactions like, "Got to be careful that we don't have a revolt spilling over

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into our part of the city.” It was not a very nice situation. It was also made more difficult because Mayor Reuter happened to be out of town on that day. He was at an international Social Democratic rally in Austria and it became an urgent matter to get him back to Berlin as quickly as possible because the acting Mayor was an FDP man, Dr. Conrad, an inadequate substitute, indeed.

Q: FDP. What was FDP?

MAUTNER: Free Democratic Party.

Q: That's the liberal-right-wing conservative group?

MAUTNER: Yes. It was sort of a mixture of old fashioned liberals and right wingers, a funny combination. Dr. Conrad represented the mayor, he was a deputy mayor who was in charge at that time. Dr. Conrad was not a terribly effective or competent man. He was a nice person but that was about it. There wasn't too much confidence in him on the part of the allies or anybody else. They wanted Reuter back. But it required special permission to fly him home on a military aircraft, to get him on a British military aircraft flying out of Klagenfurt, I believe. But they refused to make that exception, so it took practically two days to get Reuter back and that was quite damaging. There were such problems as West Berlin Social Democrats calling for a protest rally in Kreuzberg which would have been a big rally.

Q: Kreuzberg is in the American sector?

MAUTNER: In the American sector, yes. The American commandant refused permission although the police president, Dr. Stumm, a Social Democrat, said it was perfectly safe to have it. There were on the commandants' level fears that it might spill over into the east sector and cause a lot of trouble. Anyway, the mood was not as good as it should have been, and that was especially noticeable at the memorial ceremony for some West Berliners who had been killed in the revolt in East Berlin. It was at the City Hall, the

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Freedom Bell rang. The Kommandatura decided not to have the allied commandants present in uniform because that might give too much weight to the fact that the allies approved of this whole business. It was a typical reaction. Anyway, Cecil Lyon, our political advisor to our commandant, permitted my wife and me to take his state limousine with the American flag and we participated in the funeral procession and people thought this was a good show for the Americans. There was also an incident at the funeral commemorative ceremony in the City Assembly hall (the House of Representatives). There were two conspicuously empty seats where the British and the French liaison officers usually sat. I was there. I think this caused some comment.

Q: The British and the French weren't there under orders from their commandants, I assume?

MAUTNER: I assume under instructions, I don't know. Anyway, that shows the mood then.

Here I must mention RIAS (Radio in the American Sector) which had great influence in East Germany. The man in charge was Gordon Ewing. He had the responsibility of telling the people in the East what was going on. He could have been incendiary and start a blood bath. He received no guidance from his superiors in Bonn, nor in Berlin. He was able to draw on the wise (and informal) guidance of two FSO's in our Eastern Section, Charlie Hulick and Jim Ruchti and with them steered a sound path, avoiding extremist pressures. The three of them deserve much credit.

Q: If I may ask, what was the military situation? Did we have many troops there? Were they on alert? Were they on the border?

MAUTNER: The troops were certainly on the alert. I don't know how many troops we had there, at least 6,000. Of course, militarily we would have been overwhelmed by the Soviets. At the time, East Germans alone were revolting against Walter Ulbricht. What was he, he was the secretary general of the SED and the actual ruler in East Germany. In theory at least, according to four-power agreements, the allied forces could have marched

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into East Berlin and established order. Once the Russians countered, of course, that was no longer legally feasible. But at the time when the Germans were revolting I think the western powers had the right to do so. Of course, nobody had intention of doing that.

Q: What were the consequences of the June 17 uprising in our view?

MAUTNER: That's a good question. What were the long-range consequences? Well I think it certainly shook up the East German regime. We mustn't forget that that was after Stalin had died.

Q: Yes. Stalin died in March and this took place in June.

MAUTNER: There was great turmoil, presumably in the ruling forces of the Soviet communist party.

There were rumors that Wollweber, who was the German chief of intelligence and of course a KGB instrument, was advocating making concessions. He was removed shortly afterwards. This is all something I don't know too much about, but it was obviously of considerable importance. One of the consequences was a reinforced split of the city, because for the first time there was really a division. There were entrance/exit checks to control the refugee flow. It was not completely stopped but it was diminished, and on the part of the west, it became quite evident West Berlin had to be built up further and further. That became one of the really important issues. Reuter at that time made a remark which people didn't particularly appreciate. He said: "Now look, you got to build up West Berlin, you should really have made it a capital, but you didn't. West Berlin is the cheapest atom bomb in the heart of the eastern empire," meaning that as long as we held on to West Berlin, it's going to undermine the viability of at least East Germany, or maybe the whole Soviet empire. Reuter unfortunately died very soon thereafter, but I remember those words well.

Reuter's death was an enormous blow not only to West Berlin but also to the west German Social Democratic party where he had played a big role. It brought on new elections in West Berlin for a new Governing Mayor, and a new cabinet. It wasn't a direct election, of course, because the mayor was elected by the parliament, the city assembly. He appointed his cabinet and it was then approved by the parliament again. After a considerable struggle, Walter Schreiber, a CDU man, together with an FDP minority got together enough votes to become Governing Mayor. Walter Schreiber was also an old-time official of the Weimar Republic, a competent man, a little colorless but quite up to the job. One problem occurred. He had to appoint various FDP, Free Democratic Party people, to his cabinet. One of them was a Dr. Eich who was supposed to take over the economics department, which would have controlled the ERP, the American funded Marshall Plan programs. That was something we were very interested in and we didn't like the idea because Dr. Eich was not a terribly effective manager. So, I was able in various discussions, with of course the approval of my superiors, to talk Dr. Schreiber and all the people involved into keeping on Dr. Hertz who was from the SPD which was not in the government. Dr. Hertz did not become a cabinet member but in effect remained in control of the ERP and Marshall Plan affairs. That was terribly important because he ran the programs competently and honestly.

Q: Was Hertz by the way an American citizen or a German at this time?

MAUTNER: That I really don't know. I think he probably had dual citizenship. Hertz was really very much a key figure, honest and a very competent official. I'm not sure if Howard Jones was still there at that time, I don't think he was, but he was right in supporting Hertz. Eventually, the relationship between Berlin and the Federal Republic was enhanced. The fact that Schreiber was of the same party as Adenauer helped because there were fairly many close connections. Ernst Lemmer played a big role. Ernst Lemmer was a very interesting man, a good speaker, a good politician, very afraid of Adenauer, but he was a very important figure in the West Berlin party. Then slowly but surely, the legislative

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process became easier to administer in Berlin. Allied vetoes were less and less frequent. There was still a tendency on the part of some people to push for land status in the Federal Republic, but that didn't play as much a role as it did before. The next elections put the SPD in control again and Dr. Otto Suhr became the Governing Mayor. Dr. Suhr was a very nice, very honest, very straitlaced, excellent president of the city assembly, the Berlin parliament, but not a very good mayor. He was one of the typical Social Democratic intellectuals who worked much in theories and had problem administering the city. Besides, he became very ill and died eventually of cancer. During Dr. Suhr's tenure there was the Hungarian revolt.

Q: In 1956.

MAUTNER: It played a big role also in Berlin insofar as there was a tremendous demonstration in front of the Sch#neberg Rathaus, the City Hall, and some of the speakers were pathetic. I was right in the middle of the officials. Dr. Suhr's speech was intellectual, but it didn't strike a popular cord. He was followed by Ernst Lemmer who was a good demagogic speaker and did a little bit better, but by then the crowd was getting restless. Franz Neumann's speech was not very good and some groups began to call for a march to the Brandenburg Gate. Nobody knows what might have happened if they got to the border. Thereupon Willy Brandt, who was chairman of the Parliament, grabbed the microphone and made a dramatic speech quite spontaneously, hoarse as he was, and started marching the crowd not towards the Brandenburg Gate, but towards the monument commemorating the victims of Stalinism quite a distance from the Brandenburg Gate. There he led the singing of the federal anthem, "Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit," the third stanza of the old "Deutschland uber alles," and people began to calm down and disperse. Some people say he may have avoided a blood bath. I don't think that is quite true but who knows what could have happened in a confrontation at the Brandenburg Gate. That episode really propelled Brandt into the big time although it was already quite clear that he was a coming man.

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Q: He had been very close to Reuter as I understand?

MAUTNER: Brandt was very close to Reuter and also an important figure in the development of the SPD in West Germany because he represented, let's not call it a right wing, but a moderate wing. He was instrumental in 1958 in converting this old dogmatic rather stodgy Marxist party into something new through the Godesberger program. He had links and connections with the Catholic and the Protestant churches which was also important. It broadened the base of the Social Democratic Party so that it could finally jump over the eternal 33% it commanded.

Q: Was there any rumbling in East Berlin or in the Soviet zone during this period of the Polish and Hungarian uprisings in '56? Or were the Soviets in such control that...?

MAUTNER: I don't think there was much mood for rumbling in East Germany. The Soviets were clearly in control of the East German army and police. They controlled the situation very thoroughly. Of course, the control was exercised by the East German police, not the army.

Now, time moved on. There were some developments, again slightly closer relations with the Federal Republic. Suhr was difficult to deal with because he was rather scrappy vis-a-vis the commandants and resented the fact that the commandants still had sovereignty in West Berlin. He did not speak English very well, and no French. It was not a terribly good relationship but it worked. Then Suhr got ill, and died in August 1957. The parliament elected Willy Brandt as Governing Mayor who kept on most of the old cabinet and became a very strong figure in Berlin. He worked very closely with us, with the Americans. He established an excellent relationship with Bernard Gufler and Martin Hillenbrand, important since the relationship with Suhr was not all that happy. At that time Eleanor Dulles was already playing a considerable role—becoming as it were, “the Mutti of Berlin”—by bringing into Berlin all kinds of aid projects: the Studentendorf, the Student Village, and the Congresshall, all involving conflict with the existing authorities. Gufler and Hillenbrand

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didn't really like her at all. She had, I think, in essence a very good effect on the American/Berlin relationship. Willy Brandt played her very well, was nice to her, and it helped. I think Berlin got the better of the deal. There was the "Klinikum" which was one of her favorite projects. It was a very good, interesting establishment for the medical profession and made it a part of the university.

There was one incident which I think was of considerable importance. That was just before I left Berlin. If I recall this correctly, an American army helicopter from Bavaria strayed into the east zone, had trouble and had to land there. There were negotiations to get it out, initially conducted by the Potsdam American military mission (each of the powers had a military mission in the other's zone). The Americans had one in the Soviet area and the Soviets had one in the American zone. The Potsdam Mission negotiations with the Soviets—Colonel Pawel, I think, was the American—were unsuccessful. The Soviets continued to insist we deal with the East Germans. For some reason, I am not sure at what level, it was decided, certainly not on the Berlin level, the American authorities began to talk to the East Germans and got the helicopter free. Now, there were a lot of people among us, including Mr. Gufler, who thought this was a serious mistake. The Soviets would have freed the helicopter after a while and we should not have negotiated with the East Germans. Don't forget we were very much in the cold war. The East and West Germans did not discuss things together nor did the West Berliners and the East Berliners, and western allies did not talk to the East German authorities. When I left, Willy Brandt had a little evening with us, and he was also of the opinion that it may have been a mistake to begin an American talk with East Germans. I left Berlin and had a fabulous goodbye party, a lunch given by the whole senate and the presidium of the parliament where I made a little speech. There were tears in some people's eyes (including mine); it was really a moving affair.

Q: When did this take place?

MAUTNER: It was in June 1958.

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Q: So you had been in Berlin for thirteen years?

MAUTNER: Almost thirteen years.

Here I want to mention an interesting man and how his career interceded with mine. Herman Nickel was a high-school graduate, one of the first to be sent to the USA as exchange. Back in the '50s in Berlin, we hired him as a helper in my office. He went to meetings for me and reported on them and he was a highly intelligent, useful sounding board. Later, he emigrated to the U.S., eventually got a law degree, worked for some time for the NAACP, then joined Time-Life. In South Africa he was expelled in the 60s, eventually became bureau chief in Bonn and Time's diplomatic correspondent in Washington. Reagan appointed him Ambassador to South Africa where he served usefully and successfully for 5 years.

Q: And you had seen some changes in those thirteen years?

MAUTNER: I had seen many changes in those thirteen years. Berlin was still a smelling rubble when we moved in. And of course the change to real partnership. That was a genuine partnership. I should not forget, by the way, in this whole period, the important figure of Dr. Gunther Klein who was associated with Reuter and Willy Brandt. He was also an old time Weimar Republic man. He was at one time a Prussian Landrat, a high position, and a very intelligent, very shrewd man. He was strictly a "burgerlich" (bourgeois) type of Social Democrat and was very important in handling the legal relationship between the Federal Republic and Berlin. He was also someone who pushed very strongly for closer integration of Berlin and Bonn. One of his problems with the allied representatives was that he did not speak any English or French, although he knew Latin and Greek. I cannot emphasize enough how important it was in Germany that we had so many Germans who spoke excellent English, and Americans who spoke excellent German.

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Q: It was quite a change for you, leaving Berlin and coming back to an assignment in the Department. I understand that you were then sent to the Bureau of Cultural Affairs. What did you do there?

MAUTNER: Well, it was quite a change. In Berlin I was a big fish and there I was a small one. The cultural affairs assignment was to program the European exchange program, mostly a budget operation which I wasn't terribly keen about. I thought I could exercise some influence about things I considered important like the leader exchange program because of our experience in Berlin. We, on the scene, selected or suggested people to go to the United States as leaders or potential leaders and sometimes we found people in Frankfurt or Bonn on the cultural affairs side who wanted to send others whom we did not consider good material. This required considerable clout to change. We did not want to send some museum director or somebody we didn't consider really important. We were however usually able to send very important young people from Berlin who eventually became very big people in the Federal Republic or in Berlin. Just to mention Willy Brandt or Franz Amrehn who was deputy mayor for a long time, or Neubauer, Lipschitz who unfortunately died very young, as very good people, who grew in influence. But at Cultural Affairs (CU) I found myself mostly involved in shuffling money around or seeing that Fulbright programs were properly funded. It was not a terribly interesting job, but it was a job which required a certain amount of doing and concentration.

Q: Did you get a chance to do any escort duty?

MAUTNER: No, none of that but my wife escorted Mrs. Brandt through the U.S. I hardly ever saw any of the exchangees. I took a trip to Iceland and was able to get a little bit of money for Iceland at one time, it was quite interesting there. Then also a trip to Finland where we had some Finnish money which had accumulated through their paying the Finnish war debt very punctually. So, I was able to get a little bit of an increase in the

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grants which I think were quite useful and talked people on the spot into selecting people that would be useful later on to United States-Finnish relations.

Q: Did you have a feeling that Cultural Affairs was getting much attention in the Department in those years?

MAUTNER: I don't think the attention was very great. There was a political appointee, Mr. Thayer, on the assistant secretary level to run the show. Al Lightner was the professional in charge who did not like the job at all. It was sort of a backwater, I believe.

Q: What was the relationship of the Department's cultural program with USIA?

MAUTNER: It was always difficult. It was administered in the field by USIA. In Washington, it was run by the State Department, although as I said, it was a backwater. So the Cultural Affairs Officers in the field sometimes had different ideas from those of the people in the State Department. I remember once there was a meeting of Cultural Affairs Officers and Public Affairs Officers in Rome. The Public Affairs Officers were often more receptive to political views. I wouldn't say all Cultural Affairs Officers were not, but some of them were a bit narrow-minded. There was this argument: Is for instance the leadership program an instrument for the Ambassador to influence foreign policy, which is something I and Don Edgar, then deputy to Al Lightner, advocated. We were set down, that was not the purpose, etc. That reflects a little bit the tension. I think that it is good that the whole program is now in the hands of the USIA and no longer in the State Department.

Q: So there was the tension between the cultural and the political viewpoints?

MAUTNER: Definitely.

Q: Now you stayed with CU until you were summoned to work on the Berlin task force. Is that right?

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MAUTNER: That's right.

Q: And that task force was formed in 1958 or '59?

MAUTNER: No. That was 1961. '58 and '59 was a very critical period in Berlin because it was the ultimatum Khrushchev made against Berlin that he'd turnover this whole business to the East Germans. It would be then only between the Western allies and the East Germans. I suspect our helicopter "cave-in" in early 1958 gave him ideas. There were all kinds of big conferences and some very weak positions on the part of the allies. John Foster Dulles died and the Eisenhower administration was more or less on the way out and I think that we were in many ways lucky that some of the suggestions that were made were not accepted by the Soviets. It could have gotten us into a lot of trouble.

Q: With the formation of the Berlin task force in 1961 you moved effectively out of the CU Affairs, Cultural Affairs. Tell me how the task force came about and what your tasks were.

MAUTNER: Well, the task force was created as a result of the growing tension around Berlin. The refugee flow was increasing rapidly. It was quite obvious that something was going to happen. This whole task force business became a part of the development of the Operation Center which at that time was an invention of Ted Achilles and John Stutesman. At first, the most important task forces were of course the Vietnam task force and the Congo task force. Then the Berlin task force was created. I was appointed just to collect the flow of information and establish a filing system which expanded rapidly. There were the events of June and July 1961; the earlier Kennedy confrontation with Khrushchev in Vienna was one of the very important factors which established the task force.

Q: In June 1961.

MAUTNER: Then in July 1961 there were speeches made by Senator Fulbright and Senator Mansfield which caused old Berliners a little concern when they talked about West

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Berlin and not about all of Berlin. We thought this was not the right thing to do. The task force became very active very shortly before the Wall became a fact.

Q: So, the task force was not caused by the Wall. It was in existence before the Wall...

MAUTNER: It was in existence before.

Q: The Wall came on 13th of August 1961?

MAUTNER: Yes. The task force then was effectively taken over by Foy Kohler who was Assistant Secretary, and Martin Hillenbrand who was in charge of GER. John Ausland had just come back from Australia and he was made the GER expert on Berlin. Jerry Holloway became sort of the task force manager. My own position was a little bit difficult because I worked for Achilles and Ray Thurston, his deputy. Both had different views from those of Foy Kohler—in other words, from the ones who really ran the show.

Q: Did you feel that the task force was effective in what it was doing? Did it get high level attention from the Secretary and from the White House?

MAUTNER: That seemed to vary. In the beginning it was very effective because you had people like General Maxwell Taylor attending. Secretary Dean Rusk appeared quite often. The Secretary of the Treasury Fowler and all kinds of very high-powered people came. Paul Nitze played a good role, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff had their representatives. So you had a mighty powerful task force. That was after the Wall had gone up. But eventually I think the clout of the task force was reduced. It was more or less a discussion and debate club where people like myself were allowed to spout off occasionally and where my wife and the other persons represented the intelligence community. But where the actual decisions, the effective forces were, it was Martin Hillenbrand, John Ausland and Foy Kohler who had direct contact with the President. I remember in one case when John Ausland said at a task force meeting: "We decided that etc..." I asked: "Who are we?"

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The task force had never heard of the matter. My remark didn't go down too well, but it illustrates the situation.

Q: Were there many differences between the views of the State Department and those of the Defense Department in those days, or other departments?

MAUTNER: I would say yes. When the Wall went up 13th August, there was what I considered a good deal of misunderstandings in many quarters of the significance of it. I think it was on the 15th that there was a big meeting after which the White House decided to ask Vice President Johnson to go to Berlin accompanied by General Clay who still had a tremendous reputation, and to send a battle group into Berlin. There were all kinds of misunderstandings because I think the White House did not have a great deal of sympathy towards the plight of Berlin and the Germans. The German Ambassador Dr. Grewe did not have a very good relationship with the Kennedy administration. Kennedy I think distrusted Adenauer and Grewe. There was that kind of thing going on. Of course it was overcome eventually when people realized how the Berlin situation had changed. But on the task force we had an insider group of people, as I said Martin Hillenbrand and Foy Kohler and some others who worked with the White House. That was their job and they knew where the orders came from. Our complaints were sometimes that they did not fight hard enough for what would have been a little better course, but of course I can't really judge that. There on the task force you had people who saw things, let's say, more like us, cold warriorish. Paul Nitze was certainly one of them. The representatives of the Joint Chiefs of Staff too, such as General Taylor and his representative Larry Legere, myself, and a few others were strongly in favor of vigorous action and we liked the idea of General Clay going to Berlin and shaking up the situation. Flying helicopters into Steinstuecken was a good idea for example.

Q: Steinstuecken you might explain is an exclave of Berlin which was then separated...

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MAUTNER: It was an exclave of Berlin just outside the border of Zehlendorf but part of Greater Berlin. It was really saved for the west by Ulrich Biel and myself, I would say. There was a moment in the early days of the Kommandatura when this issue came up and the Steinstueckeners couldn't get ration cards from West Berlin.

Q: They were a part of West Berlin but cut off from it?

MAUTNER: They had to walk a long stretch through East German territory to get to the city proper. Colonel Babcock, who was Howley's deputy, proposed to give Steinstuecken away. Biel wrote a letter, a memorandum, which went all the way up, stating that neither Babcock nor Howley nor General Clay could give Steinstuecken away because it was legally a part of West Berlin. That really prevailed. Then I followed up by pushing the city to giving them ration cards. We thus saved Steinstuecken until General Clay flew in helicopters and MPs and it became an official American sector enclave, supplied by a mini-airlift.

Q: Now, you went along with General Clay and the Vice President on this trip to Berlin after the Wall was put up?

MAUTNER: That is correct. On the 19th of August I was along. I think it was Frank Cash who made the suggestion that I should go along with them.

Q: Tell us about your experiences on that trip. How did the Berliners receive this? Were they heartened or...?

MAUTNER: The Berliners were very enthusiastic. We had a problem before: Willy Brandt had to make a speech on the 15th which was of course intended to hearten the Berliners, give them heart, but he was obviously concerned and he sent a telegram to Kennedy which was not received very favorably in Washington. It was pretty blunt. It was an important document, and showed considerable wisdom. I think it was first published in one of Eleanor Dulles's books "The Wall is Not Forever," which proved a good title for a

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book. The flight over was a rather hectic affair. Everybody was set to drafting a speech for Vice President Johnson. Everybody was dead tired when we arrived sometime in the evening around 6 or 7 at Tempelhof. We had a little cavalcade down the lanes to the Sch#neberg Rathaus where there was an enormous crowd greeting the Vice President. All the streets were lined all the way to the Rathaus in the so-called Brandenburg Hall, a ceremonious hall. The Vice President made a speech where he made his famous, "We pledge our sacred honor" and all was very favorably received, after which, we all went to bed. Next day, it was announced that the convoy of a U.S. battle group was coming down the autobahn through the East zone, and there was great excitement. When it arrived it was greeted with great jubilation and joy. So I would say despite some of the peculiarities of the Vice President's activities in Berlin, the visit was a great success, a howling success. We took off around midnight and had a long flight back, stopped over in Gander because a duck had crashed into the windshield. The windshield had to be fixed, and we arrived during the day at Andrews Air Force Base. I was pretty pooped out but I reported to Maxwell Taylor right after my arrival on my impressions. I had met with people in Berlin who presented a rather alarmist view.

Q: Now you're back in Washington in the latter part of August 1961 having to deal with the problems presented by the Wall. First of all let me ask you, do you think we could have taken a realistic step to have prevented the Wall from being erected?

MAUTNER: I don't think we could have prevented it. We did not foresee it. We thought there would be a kind of wall around all of Berlin because the refugee flow had to be stemmed. The able manpower out of the GDR, that is the German Democratic Republic, was really draining and they had to do something. But we expected, I think we all expected a wall around all of Berlin but not in Berlin. Could we have prevented it? No, I don't think we could have prevented it. We could have foreseen it a little bit earlier. We could have done something which I consider very important, and that is not let the Wall appear to be a job of the East Germans, it should have been a job of the Russians, the Soviets as fourth occupying power. We should not have allowed the East Germans to stare our generals

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down with guns. We could have moved our forces into the east sector until they met the Soviets, which is exactly what happened at the so-called "tank confrontation" in October where General Clay decided we were going to get the Soviets into the act and show that it was a Soviet and not an East German issue.

Q: I believe that was the fall of '61, yes October of '61. Well, now, what was your role after the Wall was erected on the task force? Did you continue the same or did the pace speed up?

MAUTNER: It continued the same, but I was a little bit a maverick in the problem. I discussed the matter with Martin Hillenbrand because I felt a little uncomfortable. He was the one who was going to write my efficiency report and I was still working for Achilles and Thurston. And he said: "Well, the best thing you can do is carry on as you do. You contribute something that way." I was maybe sometimes a little tactless in doing so, but had longer experience of details than most anybody. There were points where I still think we could have done better. First of all, as I said, we should have made it clear earlier that it was the Soviets and not the East Germans whom we confronted. We had of course some problems with our allies, especially the British who were very weak-kneed on that business. Then came problems created by the micro-management from the White House. There was for example a year later this terrible incident of Peter Fechter who was shot by the East German police and fell between the lines, between the Wall and the barbed wire.

Q: In no-man's land?

MAUTNER: In no-man's land and he was dying. Now a couple of weeks, maybe two weeks earlier, when an old West Berlin friend, Rudolph Kettlein, press secretary for Willy Brandt, talked to me and said: "Now look at it. What happens if they shoot somebody and he's outside..." He was talking actually outside not between the Wall, but outside the periphery in the zone. "Would you let him die there? Is there something you can do about that?" I reported that and I think it was absolutely applicable in the Peter Fechter business.

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We had a right to go into East Berlin. The general in charge of the U.S. sector could have done something but was under constraint to do nothing at all without first getting explicit approval. He could have moved in and rescued Peter Fechter. Peter Fechter would have died anyway probably, but we had a right to go into East Berlin. We did establish that right by having Americans of the occupation moving back and forth, going to the opera, by the tank confrontation, and our jeeps moving around in East Berlin. The general had about three quarters of an hour to make that decision. He couldn't make that decision, and I don't blame him, because the orders would have to come from Washington, and it was too late, Peter Fechter died. Fortunately I think we were forgiven. I don't think that anybody remembers that we could have done that.

Q: There were other incidents of course in later years, but that was the one that I think drew attention to the inhumanity of the Wall, shooting their own people.

MAUTNER: Yes, shooting their own people. People swimming across the Teltow canal and being shot at and there were a great many...I don't know how many people were killed on the Wall, but there were quite a few of them. That is of course what Honecker was being accused of, of having ordered the shooting of those people.

Q: Yes. Well, the Wall was a fact by this time. What happened to the Berlin task force? How long did it continue in existence and what did it do in this period?

MAUTNER: I went to Africa and I don't know when it really ceased being. I think it sort of petered out. I think Pete Smith was for a while the task force manager and then they still keep some of the files. But I think the longest lasting member of the original task force was Martha Mautner. But there's also one thing very interesting about which I don't know any details, but it was the relationship between Kennedy and Ambassador Grewe. There were all kinds of frictions and I'm not quite sure whether that didn't play a certain role. It would be interesting to look into that a little further.

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Q: This would have to be to look at Ambassador Grewe's memoirs as well as those in the White House?

MAUTNER: Yes, exactly.

Q: The task force wound down and your role was completed there?

MAUTNER: Yes, a few months later.

Q: You were assigned to Khartoum in 1963. That must have been a complete change for you?

MAUTNER: That was quite a big change. I am not quite sure whether it was a terribly good assignment because I had no experience in the Arabic world at all. I was to be chief of the political section. As it was, I rather enjoyed the assignment, which lasted about two years although it probably didn't help my career. It was an interesting assignment and in many ways rewarding. I also think that I not only learned a little bit but I think I was in a way doing some good there.

Q: Who was the Ambassador there?

MAUTNER: The Ambassador was Bill Rountree and the DCM was Tom McElhiney, both of them experienced hands, both of them had been there for three years already. The Ambassador was an old Middle-East hand. He had been involved in Egyptian affairs in the days of John Foster Dulles.

Q: Yes, he was Assistant Secretary for the Middle East under Mr. Dulles.

MAUTNER: Was he Assistant Secretary? I think you're right.

Q: Yes. Did you feel that you were accepted by the regional specialists, the Arabists there?

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MAUTNER: You are talking about the Americans?

Q: Yes.

MAUTNER: I don't think I got very close to them. I had some difficulty because as soon as I got aboard, we got information that the locals working for the political section had to be fired because they were unreliable or had contact with Egyptians. We also had a new young officer as an Arabist; he fortunately turned out to be very good and really the backbone of the section later on, Art Lowrie. But the whole assignment was difficult. I had a rather funny introduction to the local scene because one of the important figures in Sudan history was Slatin Pasha, an Austrian who as a young officer joined the Anglo-Egyptian forces, and aged twenty-five became governor of Darfur, the far western province. He got into a conflict with Gordon Pasha, on religious grounds, staged a big long retreat of his Egyptian forces but was finally captured by the Mahdi. He spent eleven years in prison in Omdurman, escaped and became then, after the British victory over the Mahdi's successor, Inspector General of the Anglo Egyptian-Sudan appointed by Kitchener. He stayed on until 1916. Now as it happened, his nephew Heinrich von Slatin went to the same school as I did and on occasion we played with a toy railway in his yard and there I once met the old gentleman, Slatin Pasha, and shook his hand. When I reported this to some of the Sudanese they were quite excited. "He knew Slatin Pasha" and that got me a fine entree with some people. One of them, by the way, made a very interesting remark. He said: "You know the British were good administrators and they were very smart in appointing Slatin Pasha as inspector general because by the time he escaped, he had gotten to know everything that was important in Sudan. He knew all the tribes and where they were supposed to graze or live after the war. When he came back he rearranged the resettlement of the tribes and it showed that the British were very intelligent administrators."

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Q: Did you find that you were accepted by most of the Sudanese? Were they friendly to the Americans at that time, or not?

MAUTNER: They were very friendly to Americans; they were all together friendly people, and I found that the ones I dealt with were definitely easy to deal with.

Q: Did you get to travel? The Sudan being the largest country in Africa and...?

MAUTNER: I traveled a bit. I took one trip out into the west, of course with a military escort which was one way of getting around because there are no roads, or only marginal roads. We had a truck escort and traveled in a jeep. First of all, I flew out to El Obeid which is the regional capital of Kordovan. There we picked up this escort and drove out to Darfur, the mountains of Djebel Mara where they had water and oranges growing in a rather nice part of the country. Then to Niala. We got caught by the rains and one of the escort officers said we'd better get out because if we stayed any longer we'd have to stay there through the winter. That was an interesting trip, and made a rather good trip report I believe. Then I had another trip where we went to Abu Simbel which at that time was not yet flooded, but was still the original Abu Simbel and then came back by famous railway from Wadi Halfa through the desert which the British had built when fighting the Mahdi. That was interesting, but more for sightseeing.

Q: Could you tell at that time, it was of course many years ago, that there would be the terrible troubles that the Sudan is now experiencing? The regional fighting?

MAUTNER: The regional fighting? Not at that time when I made the trip, but it became quite clear that there would be trouble towards the end of my stay there. First of all, the Arab Sudanese are just as black as the Southern Sudanese are, but are of a different racial and tribal stock. They claim to be Arabs because they have somehow a family line back to the Arab conquerors who then married local girls. But they certainly dominate the situation, and at that time they began to clean, let's call it ethnic cleansing, part of the

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South of foreigners by getting rid of the Comboni fathers, the Catholic orders and other missionaries who had split up the territories among themselves to work with the Southern non-Muslim tribes. According to the Arabs the British had given various parts to various missions in order to divide and conquer. Now, that immediately isolated those parts from the outside world. Then you heard of trouble starting here and there and the appointment of fairly powerful Northern Arab generals to go out and take charge of garrisons in the South. It was quite clear that something was brewing. Of course, there had been revolts in '56 when the country became independent but they had stopped somehow. What we could do about it in my days there, I don't know. At that time there were still a few expatriate people in the South. One of them ran a tea plantation and a Greek merchant, sort of a Greek patriarch, ran a big store in Juba, eventually had to give up and leave. So the Europeans in that area began to be fewer and fewer.

I had an interesting trip there when my family and I took a vacation in Uganda. In those days Uganda was still a paradise and we drove around a couple of thousand miles in a little Peugeot which we rented from an Indian, got throughout the whole country, and on the way back, we flew from Kampala via Juba to Khartoum and in Juba I got off the plane. We still had an AID expediter there, and I stayed with him overnight. Went out hunting and shot some game. There we saw herds of giraffes—running free. Then we still visited the old Greek patriarch before I flew back. So I got a little bit of the flavor of the situation in Juba. I went to the Catholic church there which was interesting because the service was all in a strange language (it was already after Vatican II) in a language I didn't understand. I noted that they had a crucifix with a black Jesus on a white cross. I am not quite sure what the local Arab administration reported about me going there but, anyway, that was quite an interesting stopover.

Then later in 1964, suddenly there was an uprising against the incumbent military government. It had become quite corrupt, had lost influence and power. A student uprising in which one student was shot, was seized on by the people who wanted to revolt. They paraded the body up and down the main street and the government just folded,

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resigned. A new moderate government took over. Very quickly attempts were made by the communists who were ensconced in the trade unions to take over. Fortunately, the communist organization had no mass support at that time and supporters of the Mahdi family, the Ansari, came into town en masse with their clubs and sticks. That was the end of the communists' attempt to move in at that time. Later, the grandson of the old Mahdi, Sadiq El Mahdi, took over as prime minister. He found that governing a country is not as simple as it seems, especially if the country has internal divisions and economic and racial difficulties. A variety of governments followed, sometimes a military group took over. Sudan wound up eventually with a military dictatorship which ran into great problems in the south, a real revolt of southern tribes. General Nimeiri's military dictatorship was eventually overthrown, to be replaced by another military dictator and then for a while there was quasi democracy again under Sadiq El Mahdi. Now a military-fundamentalist Islamic dictatorship rules and is engaged in a genocidal war against the non-Islamic southern tribes.

Q: So Karl, your time in Khartoum drew to an end in 1965.

MAUTNER: In May 1965, I left.

Q: And you were transferred back to the Department?

MAUTNER: Yes. The children enjoyed themselves in the Sudan, and I enjoyed it actually. The children went to the local schools, to the Comboni Middle School, based on an Oxford-entry system. The American Embassy-run school was not terribly good. I'm not quite sure if I made myself many friends for sending my kids to the local school, but they learned arithmetic, spelling, and English history (with an Italian accent).

Q: Which doesn't seem to have hurt them. Now, when you came back to Washington, you were detailed to NASA, is this correct?

MAUTNER: That is correct. I was detailed to NASA. When I told this to the secretary on the way out when I was given that detail, she said: "Oh, that's a wonderful place. I spent

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my honeymoon there.” (She understood Nassau) Anyway, the NASA assignment was the Office of International Affairs at NASA. In essence we were handling the problem that had international, or in other words, required State Department input. We dealt usually with Herman Pollack's Office of Scientific Affairs, or whatever it was called at that time, and most of my time was really occupied with working on agreements for tracking stations and ground support in foreign countries or various things connected with support of the Apollo program.

Q: Did you travel in this job or not?

MAUTNER: Only a couple of times down to the Cape where there were Apollo-related conferences, otherwise not. Later on, after the successful completion of the Apollo program, I transferred to the civil service at NASA on the same level, and handled part of the technology exchange program. NASA was supplying to the Commerce Department or the State Munitions Control people, expertise about technology exchanges, whether or not something should be permitted to go abroad. My job was finding and shepherding the appropriate experts, because we were dealing in some cases with far-out technology, things I certainly did not understand and nobody else on the particular task force or committee understood unless they were extremely well explained. So I located experts—NASA had experts of all far-out technologies—and attempted to shepherd them so that their explanations could be intelligible to the uninitiated. Our function was not only to have a deciding voice in rare cases, but to explain the problems. These usually hinged on clashes between the Commerce Department's efforts to export something and the Defense Department's mandate to protect our technology and our security.

Q: Did your work require you to deal with foreign embassies here or the science attach#s in making arrangements in technology...?

MAUTNER: Very little. The Apollo program was of course the important part. We had to have landing strips for emergency aircraft in various places, for example, in Mauritius.

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You don't just get a landing strip for that kind of big rescue aircraft. It has to be built, so you have to negotiate with the countries and sort of talk them into it. It takes a lot of time. Concrete doesn't mature in twenty-four days. A good landing strip takes a year or longer to be built. So that kind of thing was quite interesting and entailed many backs-and-forths and explaining of the situation to the appropriate people at the State Department (the Assistant Secretary of the African Bureau for instance as far as Mauritius was concerned), keeping the people happy in Madagascar where we had an important tracking station, all that kind of thing was part of our effort. There were always a lot of negotiations between the people on the spot. There were engineers on the spot who sometimes got in trouble or sometimes weren't very diplomatic, and we and the State Department effectively controlled the situation ultimately, in almost all cases.

Q: I think that NASA always had one advantage. It had money which the State Department doesn't always have.

MAUTNER: That is true, yes. At that time certainly.

Q: Now, was there ever an occasion where a country turned us down flat on our request for a landing strip?

MAUTNER: I also managed or shepherded a program called the National Geodetic Satellite Program which required cameras and laser stations of a small kind to be placed in various spots in the world for triangulation with a satellite in order to determine the exact location of certain parts of the world. For example; when we put our tracking station in Madagascar, we found we didn't really know where Madagascar was because heretofore the distance between Africa and Madagascar was estimated by ships going back and forth, and now that we had a satellite, we found out that we were about twelve hundred feet off. This kind of business, this program which was supposed to be a network over the whole world was reasonably successful. But we had no tracking stations in the then east bloc. We were generally not turned down because we usually had good cooperation

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with the countries with the exception of India where we needed a station in an area the Indians didn't want to give us entry. I recall few other problems. Some of the problems were purely geographical because we had to have a station in a completely ice-covered island in Antarctica and it posed logistic problems for the people who ran the program, but no political problems in that case.

Q: But generally you found that the nations were cooperative? Because in fact all of them would benefit in the final analysis in establishing their geographic location.

MAUTNER: I think in general the nations were quite cooperative. It needed a good deal of explanation sometimes.

Q: Did you find that the people at NASA were pleased to have someone from the State Department with them? Did you get cooperation?

MAUTNER: I got cooperation on a personal basis. We had an office which was run by a very difficult gentleman. He was not a great favorite of many people because he was a very pushy, very brilliant man, but he was also a consummate bureaucrat who insisted on doing things which sometimes other bureaus felt they could do themselves.

Q: I gather that after completion of your assignment at NASA you retired?

MAUTNER: That's correct.

Q: You certainly had an interesting Foreign Service career from the days you landed in a political job in Berlin in military uniform until the time you were negotiating with the Indians and various African nations in regard to the highest reaches of space. Thank you very much. But one last question. What would you consider the greatest accomplishment had been in your career?

MAUTNER: Ah, it's a difficult question. I think the highlight of my career was really my Berlin assignment. The fact that I was accepted in the Foreign Service coming really

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completely from the outside. I don't know why, but evidently I did a reasonably good job and the Berlin assignment was just something that was ready-made for me. I was able to create a job, which was carried on later by a variety of people who moved very well forward in the Service and the pattern I set there for the relationship between Berlin and the American and also the allied forces was, I think, important. I would go back to the days when I was told by my predecessor that: "You have the mayor come in and stand at attention," and the way I managed to make my commandant be the first one to go down to pay a call on the mayor, because the acting mayor happened to be Frau Schroeder. I used the fact that she was a lady to play on the chivalry of a cavalier (Howley) to set a precedent for the other commandants. I was successful, I think, because I was able to make my contacts feel comfortable enough to let their hair down when talking with me. It all led to considerable loosening of relations between the various commandants (including the French) and the local government.

I believe that I had a chance to exercise more—and good—influence on American attitudes and policy than my rank warranted. I did useful things for my country and that is a good satisfaction.

Q: Alright. And on the other side, what would you say had been your greatest frustration in the Foreign Service?

MAUTNER: There were lots of frustrations but nothing was the greatest. I would say I had a reasonably happy career. I had ups and downs and I'm certainly grateful to Uncle Sam that he has made it possible for a complete outsider and one without a terribly good basic education to get as far as I did; to lead me to Berlin where I met my wife who is a great inspiration; maybe that was my greatest accomplishment, to have met my wife and captured her. Both of us, at that time, worked for the formidable Rebecca Wellington, Political Advisor to the U.S. commandant, later Consul General in Salzburg.

Q: You married into the Foreign Service as well as being a part of it.

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MAUTNER: As our old friend Jimmy O'Donnell, the famous correspondent and a Berlin expert said: "Anybody who's smart enough to marry Martha Mautner must be pretty good himself."

Q: That's a good note on which to end. Thank you Karl.

End of interview